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# THE NOVELTIES OF ROMANISM: OR, POPERY REFUTED BY TRADITION.

A

# SERMON,

PREACHED IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MANCHESTER.

BY

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"I PREFER THE ANTIQUITY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH TO THE NOVELTY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME."

BISHOP RIDLEY.

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TO

THE REVEREND

GEORGE DUGARD, M.A.

INCUMBENT OF ST. ANDREW'S, ANCOATS,

IN WHOSE CHURCH IT WAS PREACHED,

AND

TO THE GREAT BODY OF THE CLERGY OF MANCHESTER,

WHO WERE PRESENT AT ITS DELIVERY,

AND WHO KINDLY

REQUESTED ITS PUBLICATION

THE FOLLOWING SERMON

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

# A SERMON.

1 Cor. xi. 16.

"*But if any Man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.*"

Nothing can be more striking, nothing more perfect in its charity, than the manner in which, in the 8th chapter of this Epistle, and the 14th chapter to the Romans, St. Paul treats the weaker brethren, and directs that they should be treated by others. Would to God that in these days, those who esteem themselves, or are accounted by others, the stronger brethren, would act on this principle and walk by this rule!

Now, however learned, however mighty in the Scriptures, however skilful as critics or profound as metaphysicians, those persons may be who are usually denominated High Churchmen, they are regarded by many as weaker brethren, utterly ignorant of the

Gospel. If it *be* so, if they *are* weaker brethren in the opinion of those who thus assume authority to decide, (sometimes, it must be admitted, without any great proficiency in theology,) let them receive that gentle treatment, that allowance for conscientious prejudices, that courtesy, consideration, and kindness which St. Paul recommends. If they are in error, let them be refuted by argument; if they violate the regulations or principles of the Church of England, let the fact be proved and let them be suspended: but admonish them affectionately as brethren in Christ: do not resort to the arts of the profane; do not misrepresent their principles, or ridicule that conduct which, however absurd it may appear to others, *they* believe to be pious: do not denounce them without hearing what they have to say, or without reading, with unprejudiced minds, what they may have written: do not attribute wrong motives to them: do not call them Jesuits in disguise: do not hold them up as persons desirous to deceive. For why should they wish to deceive you more than their accusers? Their principles are not those which lead to preferment: they can only maintain them because they believe them to be the truth as it is in Jesus.*

* We have certainly just cause to complain of the Religious Tract Society, although it is supported by many good and pious men, when we find it stated in a recent number of its "Monthly Record," entitled "The Christian Spectator," that those who hold the principles advocated in the present discourse, are enemies to the cause of Christian Truth,

Among the heaviest of the charges which are brought against them, their regard for Antiquity and their respect for the Fathers is the most prominent. But what does this offence amount to?

Let me state, in a few words, what their principle is. In all questions of doctrine and practice which may arise in the Christian Church they fully admit that the first and last appeal lies to Holy Scripture. *To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* And where both parties agree in their interpretation of the words of Scripture, this appeal will bring all controversies to the most satisfactory determination. The private Christian, looking into this true mirror, discovers the blemishes and defects in his own conduct; and the Church *puts on her ornaments, and is sanctified and cleansed by the Word.*

more formidable than the Socialists; the Socialists being Atheistic sensualists. They are accused, with the Papists, of "an intense dislike of the peculiar doctrines of scripture." Comparing them with avowed Infidels, the work referred to, says: "it is not possible that the object of either party could be more plainly declared. The one would throw down the Christianity of the Bible, the other would dig up the foundations of Christianity altogether. These their purposes they loudly proclaim and fiercely pursue. They have declared a war of extermination, and the inscription on the banner of both is, I will overturn, overturn, overturn." *See the Christian Spectator for September* 18, 1839, *and the Rev. Wm. Dalby's Letter to the Editor of the British Magazine.* However much in error the supporters of that Society may consider High Churchmen to be, they are surely going too far when they speak of them in such language as this.

But a little observation will convince us that the controversies which arise in the Church can seldom be decided by this appeal. The records of past ages prove this, and daily experience shews it. Each party in a dispute claims Scripture for its own side, and, as the sense of Scripture, it zealously maintains its own interpretation. If there be, then, no further appeal, the question can never be decided. There is, therefore, another test, which, in the opinion of those I am defending, Scripture itself allows and sanctions,—the testimony of the Church from the beginning. And to this test St. Paul, in our text, sets us an example of making an appeal. *We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.*

Thus these persons conceive that a way to peace is provided in harmony with the common rule of life, and the law by which society is held together; for how much of law and of the rules of society is based on precedent! They conceive that they act in the spirit of the Church of England; for it is plain to every one who has considered the language of the Church that a deference to antiquity pervades her Articles, forms the argument of some of her most instructive Homilies, and breathes through every portion of her Prayers: they conceive that *when they stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths where is the good way that we may walk therein*, they act, as I have shewn, in accordance

with a principle provided for us in Scripture, and in accordance with which St. Paul reasoned in the words of our text.

Now this it is that induces them to study the writings of the primitive Fathers of the Church. There seems, however, to be a prejudice against the very name of the Fathers; a prejudice which certainly was not felt by Ridley, or by Cranmer, or any of the learned and pious confessors and martyrs to whom we owe the Reformation of our Church. And why should it be felt now? for, let me ask, who are the Fathers? They are merely ancient writers who lived in the earlier ages of the Church. Now one would think that there could be no great sin in our venturing to read the works of these ancient authors. It is said that we ought to refer for our divinity to the Bible and the Bible only. God knows, my Brethren, that I wish the Bible were more exclusively read than it is, and no one can regret more than I do to find the Bible so generally superseded by tracts. But those very tracts are most diligently distributed by the very persons who most vehemently blame us for venturing to read the Fathers. Nay, by those persons themselves these tracts are read: in many instances they are the fountains, not always surely the purest, from which they drink in their theology. But what is a tract? It is a little treatise or sermon composed by some person or persons, not, certainly, infallible.

Now similar treatises and sermons form the works of the Fathers. Both parties, then, you will observe, are tract readers, and why should he who reads an ancient tract be blameworthy, while he who reads a modern tract is held worthy of praise? But it is said the modern tracts are sound in doctrine, the ancient tracts are not so. And, let me ask, who says this? Is it said by an infallible man? What proof do you bring from Scripture that modern tracts must be sound in doctrine, and ancient tracts not so? It is merely a matter of opinion, and when one man praises the ancient tracts to the disparagement of the modern, it is quite as probable that his opinion should be correct as that of another person who praises the modern tracts to the disparagement of the ancient: and more probable, if it is in the nature of truth to be better understood near to the fountain head, than after its transmission through many generations. Is it said that one is scriptural the other not scriptural? This is only repeating the last assertion in a different form. If the tract contain anything of doctrine more than an extract from Scripture without note or comment—and then it is Scripture itself—it must be a deduction from or an explanation of Scripture, and we have just as much right to assert that the deduction made from Scripture in an ancient tract is scriptural, as another person has to make the same assertion as to a modern tract. Disagree with

us, if you will, in your opinion of this matter—but why object to our principle while you adopt it in another form? We are both tract readers; the only difference being that some of us go for these tracts to St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Athanasius, to whom our Prayer Book is indebted for much of its excellence; others to a modern Religious Tract Society, sanctioned, it may be, by what is called the religious world; which is, nevertheless, no more infallible than the Church of Rome, though the members of both seem to rely on their traditions with undoubting confidence.*

* By the religious world I mean that conventional union of sects and parties which is formed by those who agree to merge the distinctive features of every sect, (and where Churchmen belong to it, the distinctive features of the Church itself,) in order that they may insist in common upon what that world deems to be essential truth. But the question still occurs whether that world is competent to decide what part of the Revelation of God is essential and what is not. Of this proposition those who are called High Churchmen hold the negative. The difficulty of their present position consists in the religious world having assumed that all pious persons must belong to it. But there are persons whose zeal for the cause of religion, whatever may be their faults, is ardent, but who at the same time refuse to subscribe to many of the traditional doctrines and some of the practices of the religious world. The members of the religious world cannot conceive the possibility of such persons being really pious and sincere: hence the hostility to them: their real fault being their rejection of the tradition of the religious world, the controversy of the present day having reference, in fact, to this one question: according to what tradition shall Scripture be interpreted? according to the tradition of the Church of Rome? or according to the tradition of the religious world? or according to the tradition of the primitive church?—the latter being, as we contend, embodied in the formularies of the Church of England.

But it is said, "Scripture is so plain, we will have the Bible and the Bible only: what need have we of the Fathers in addition? this is to add to the word of God." Surely, we may answer, "Scripture *is* plain, and we, too, will have the Bible and the Bible only—what need have you of commentators? Their comment is an addition to the word of God." But the Bible having come down to us in a dead language, we do absolutely require some commentary to elucidate its diction and phraseology;—a translation is itself, to a certain extent, a commentary; it might easily be shewn how ours actually is so. Again, there is allusion in Scripture to many antiquated rites and customs; and some acquaintance with the history and opinions of the age in which the New Testament was written is important; here, then, we also require a commentary. Is it said that you can get all this from a modern commentator? this is true, and one modern commentator may borrow his facts from another without reference to the original authority, and one may copy the mistakes of another, and hence false facts may become current in the world: but the first commentators must have gone to the contemporary writers, that is to say, to the Fathers. Even admitting, then, that it is a work of supererogation for *us* to consult the Fathers, to ascertain whether the modern commentators are correct, still there can be nothing sinful in doing so; since for what you know

of these things, you are as dependent upon the Fathers as *we* are, the difference being that you derive your information from secondary, we from primary sources.

As to doctrine, it is said that the wisest and best plan is to make Scripture its own interpreter, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I have already said that this is admitted by those who are complained of; and who are more diligent than they in explaining one Scripture by another? But I have also shewn that after having done this, there are still many points on which we cannot come to an agreement,—aye, and important points, too. Now take any passages or collection of the passages of Holy Scripture from which you and I deduce a different doctrine. What is it that any disputant does? His favorite commentator is brought down from the shelf, and to him deference is paid. Why? Because he is recognized as the organ expressing the sense, *i. e.* the tradition of his own sect or school, just as a Romish commentator expresses the sense, *i. e.* the tradition of the Church of Rome. Is there any sin, then, if the High Churchman (applying this conceded principle in a different manner) looks to the Fathers, not as an inspired authority, but to ascertain from their writings what was the meaning attached to the passage or passages under consideration in the first ages

of the Church, before modern controversies were started. And what makes the value of these primitive writings the greater in this respect is, that the Fathers not only possessed many written documents now lost, but it was part of their religion, if I may so say, to preserve the doctrine they had received in its purity from the apostles, and to hand it down to their children; they transmitted the once-kindled lamp from sire to son, never suffering its light to grow dim, or its heat to evaporate. And as a member of a lately-founded sect can soon detect whether an interpretation of Scripture be in accordance with what *he* calls the gospel, so did a primitive Christian understand whether such an interpretation was or was not contrary to what *he* called the Catholic faith.

But it is said that some of the Fathers were sometimes in error. Now I certainly do protest against the manner in which it is not unfrequently attempted by not very wise men to prove this, which is thus: "Such a Father differs from me, a modern teacher, therefore such a Father must be in error": the whole authority of which judgment depends upon an assumption, more bold than modest, that the modern teacher is infallible: or if he defend himself by saying that his is the opinion of the religious world, again, I ask, Is the religious world itself infallible? We know that the great object with the

religious world is to produce not unity in the Church, but union among Sects;—to do this many scriptural principles must, on all sides, be conceded, and much regarded as non-essential, which to some persons appears to be essential. We cannot allow, then, a reference to the opinion of the religious world to be of any authority in such a case. But as a matter of fact, we do admit that many of the Fathers did err. Who ever thought them to be infallible men? Nay, the student of the Fathers can point out to you the kind of error to which any particular Father may have had a tendency, and he can probably shew how that error was detected and animadverted upon by his contemporaries. But admit that they erred,—what then? Are we not to read them because they were liable to error? In many of the works published by popular Tract Societies, I could point out, not only errors, but if I were to use the language of those who condemn the Fathers, I should say, grievous heresies: yet, are we on that account to refuse to read any modern Tract? But this is what they ought to do who censure us for studying the Fathers, because the Fathers were not infallible men. What we chiefly desire in reading them is, to ascertain, not what the private opinions of individual Fathers were, but, for reasons I have before assigned, what was the general system of Doctrine in their age.

But a popular argument against this use of the Fathers, and this deference to the tradition of the Ancient Church, rather than to that of the modern religious world is, that it is impossible for the mass of mankind to study writings so voluminous. But are the mass of mankind appointed to be teachers? We may fairly expect those who are ordained to the office of teaching to attend to such things, for to enable them to do so is the very reason why the Church is endowed. But in no sense will the objection hold as applicable to members of the Church of England; for it is asserted, and has never been contradicted, that on all essential points this primitive tradition is embodied in the Book of Common Prayer. It is this that gives to the Prayer Book its weight and authority as an interpreter of Scripture. As such, it is, of necessity, to a certain extent, employed by those even who endeavour to unite their duty to the Church with their duty to the religious world;—to the Church of which the object is to bind us to those very principles which the religious world would relax. They may have their reasons for this deference to an uninspired formulary, those who are called High Churchmen, may have theirs, which is the one I have assigned;—the fact, namely, of its embodying that primitive tradition, which, though not the light of the gospel itself, for which we look to scripture, may be serviceable to weaker brethren, when the blasts of

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strange doctrine are raging furiously around us, and threatening to bring down the very bulwarks of our Zion, to act as a lanthorn for the protection of that light. And if the High Churchmen provide you, my Brethren, with another reason for loving your Prayer Book, forgive them this wrong.

But then comes the grand charge of all—this system of deference to antiquity must lead to Popery: an assertion which it is the more difficult to refute since it is impossible in these days to ascertain what, in the sense of the religious world, Popery is. Some persons tell us that the *surplice* is a rag of Popery, because the Papists in their ministrations wear a surplice in common with ourselves; others speak of the *Prayer Book* as Popish, because almost the whole of the Book of Common Prayer may be found in the Roman Missal and Breviary. Some religionists regard infant baptism as a remnant of Popery, while others only think it Popish to suppose that infants derive any benefit from that Sacrament: some persons think the Catechism Popish, and others that it is Popish to teach children doctrines before they can understand them: a highly respectable, though, as I think, an awfully mistaken class of religionists, who profess to be guided by the Bible only, think the doctrine of the Trinity Popish, because the Papists, amidst all their corruptions, still worship the Trinity in

Unity and the Unity in Trinity. Now the real fact is, that you may in this way prove almost any Scriptural truth to be Popish, because Popery consists in novel enlargements of old Catholic truths; in *novel additions to ancient and true doctrines.* Thus the Papist holds with us that the twenty-two Books of the Old Testament are canonical; but then he *adds* to them other books which we affirm to be apocryphal: he agrees with us in believing that after death there is a heaven and a hell, but then he *adds* a purgatory. He agrees with us that sins are to be remitted by the merits of Christ; but he *adds* the merits of the saints. He agrees with us that God is to be worshipped; but he *adds* again an inferior worship due to the saints, together with the Virgin and the angels. He receives Christ as a Mediator; but again he *adds* the mediation of the Virgin, saints, and angels. He agrees with us in believing our Lord's real presence at the Eucharist; he *adds* his corporeal presence by transubstantiation. He agrees with us in believing the Communion of Saints; he *adds* the invocation of them. He agrees with us in maintaining the divine authority of Bishops and Priests; he *adds* the supremacy of the Pope over all Bishops and Priests. He receives with us the three creeds; he *adds* the creed of Pope Pius the IV. These additions have led to further corruptions; such as the adoration of the consecrated bread at the Lord's Supper, the worship of images, and

other superstitions not needful to refer to. You perceive, then, the very great absurdity of accusing persons of being Popish merely because it may be shewn that the doctrines which they happen to hold are doctrines held also by the Papists. Why, on this ground, all would be Papists who believe in the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture; since such is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, as strongly enforced in the Vatican as in the Meeting House. The real question is not whether the Papists hold such and such doctrines in common with us; but whether we adhere to their additions to the Gospel truth. To accuse those of an inclination so to do, who have a respect for antiquity, is evidently absurd; they are the very *last* persons to sanction Popish novelties, for the moment they do so their deference for antiquity must, in the very nature of things, cease; that is, they must renounce their principle before they can countenance Popery.

How can those who have respect for antiquity acknowledge the Supremacy of the See of Rome, when they remember how Polycrates and the Bishops of Asia opposed the opinion of Pope Victor and despised his excommunications?—how the same Victor was rebuked for his arrogance and indiscretion by Irenæus?* how

* Euseb Eccles. Hist. Lib. v. c. 24.

St. Cyprian saluted the Bishop of Rome by no higher title than that of brother and colleague, and feared not to express his contempt of Pope Stephen's judgment and determinations when that prelate gave his countenance to heretics?*—when they remember how Liberius Bishop of Rome, in the 4th century applied to the great St. Athanasius to sanction his confession of faith: "that I may know," said that Pope of Rome to Athanasius, "whether I am of the same judgment with you in matters of faith, and that I may be more certain, and readily obey your commands?"† When they learn from Gregory the Great, himself Bishop of Rome in the 6th and 7th centuries, that "the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon were they who first offered to his predecessors the title of universal Bishop, which they refused to accept"‡; as well they might, since Gregory tells us elsewhere in this epistle, that it is "a title blasphemous to Christian ears"? When they remember that the fourth Lateran was the first of those Councils which even Romanists call general, that recognized the authority of the Roman See as Supreme over the church,—a Council which assembled in the year 1215? How can they ever recognize the Church of Rome as "the mistress and mother of all churches," when they know that the Fathers of the second general Council,

* Cyp: ad Pomp 74. † Athanas: Ep. ad Epictet.

‡ Greg: Epist: Lib. 7. Ep. 30.

that of Constantinople in the year 381, gave that very title to the Church, not of Rome but of Jerusalem, writing in their synodical epistle: "we acknowledge the most venerable Cyril, most beloved of God to be the Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, which is the mother of all churches."*

No, my brethren, whatever difficulties some persons, relying only on themselves, may have in explaining that passage in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church:* the Romish argument founded upon that text will fall harmless upon those who defer to the Fathers; since we have St. Augustine,† and St. Gregory Nazianzen,‡ and St. Cyril,§ and St. Chrysostom,‖ and St. Ambrose,¶ and St. Hilary,** expounding that Scripture in the protestant sense.

Neither are *they* very likely to fall down and worship the Saints departed who know that among the Fathers one of the strongest arguments, as they deemed it, which could be brought forward in favor of our Lord's divinity was the fact that *prayer* was to be made unto Him;—while we are commanded to pray only to God. The

* Conc. ii. 966. Perceval's Roman Schism, p. 32.
† Augustine De Verb. Dom. Serm. 13.
‡ Nazian. Test. de Vet. Testam. § Cyril de Trin. Lib. 4.
‖ St. Chrysost. Hom. 55. in Mat. ¶ Ambros. Com. in Ephes.
** Hilar. de Trin. Lib. 2. c. 6.

injunction to pray to Him was, in their minds, an assertion of his divinity. In vain to them will the Romanists attempt to explain away the second commandment: they will not even commence an argument upon the subject —their answer being, *we have no such custom, neither the churches of God:* they know that image worship was not sanctioned in any part of the Church, until what is called the deutero-nicene Council, in the year 787. And the decree of that Pseudo-council was immediately repudiated by the Emperor of the West, and all the great divines of the day, and among others by the clergy of the English Church. In vain did the Pope of Rome give his sanction to the idolatry; at a council assembled at Frankfort, the decree was (to use the language of the council itself,) "rejected," "despised," and "condemned" as a wickedness and a novelty.*

Does the Romanist bring forth his specious arguments (and he *can* do so,) for praying in a language not understood by the people: our answer is obvious: *we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God:* for antecedently to the 8th century, we can discover no nation which had not the Liturgy and Holy Scriptures in its own language, or a language known to it; Origen

* Canon. 11 Conc: Frankf.

expressly stating that in his time every person prayed to God in his own tongue, the Greeks using the Greek, the Romans the Roman Language.*

Think you those who defer to the primitive tradition of the Church will join with the Papists in enforcing the practice of auricular confession to the Priest? No, my brethren, though the Church of England does recommend, in her first exhortation to the Holy Communion, that if "any one cannot quiet his conscience, but requireth further comfort and counsel, he should go to some discreet and learned minister of God, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice"; though such be the recommendation of the Church of England,† we know that auricular confession was never imposed as *necessary* until the Lateran Council in 1215.

It is sometimes insinuated that those who have a respect for the practices of antiquity, must be in favor of the celibacy of the Clergy, and it seems in vain that such clergymen by their own marriage shew practically the

* Orig. Cont. Cels. Lib. viii. p. 402.

† "Sudden changes without substantial necessary causes and the heady setting forth of extremities I did never love. Confession to the Minister which is able to instruct, comfort, and inform the weak and ignorant consciences, I have ever thought might do much good in Christ's congregation, and so I assure you I do at this day."—*Bishop Ridley's Letter. Appendix to Strype's Cranmer*, ii. 965.

injustice of the insinuation. But on this point we are under no concern; we still say to the Romanists, *we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.* It is true that many of the Fathers felt strongly with Richard Baxter, the celebrated non-conformist, that it might often be "inconvenient for ministers to marry who have no sort of necessity"*: these are the words of that pious non-conformist, and, perhaps, he thought, as the Fathers thought, that the same was taught by St. Paul, in the 7th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: they—St. Paul, the Fathers, and that pious non-conformist—thought that men were ordained not merely to make themselves comfortable, and to maintain a respectable station in Society,—but to devote all their energies, their Body, Soul, and Spirit, to the service of the Saviour, who bought them with his Blood: and they thought that in many instances men could do this better without the burden of a family than with it: many of the Fathers may have erred in this opinion; and those who *censure* that opinion, may, I suppose, *likewise* err:—some of them may have carried their notions on this point to an extreme, and I, for one, think that they did so†: but *they* were not

* Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter, Chap. vi.

† I may add that some of the opinions advanced on this subject by some of the learned and pious writers of the Oxford Tracts appear to me to be incautious. I admit that the argument in favor of the

the authors of that iniquitous and demoralizing and soul-destroying rule of the Romish Church, by which Priests are *constrained* to vow a single life: for this rule was first obtruded in the Western Church (it is not even yet the rule of the Eastern Church,) by Pope Hildebrand in the year 1074: and then the innovation was sturdily opposed by many of our English Clergy.*

But we will advance yet further. There is an inclination on the part of some Protestants to the doctrine of Purgatory: for what is Hell, in the estimation of those who deny the eternity of future punishments, but a Purgatory? And to those inclined to think well of the doctrine, the Romanist has some apparent scriptural authority to produce. He refers us to the third chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, where we read at the 13th verse: *The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss, yet he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire.* By such a passage some

celibacy of the clergy is strong, and such as to recommend itself to pure and holy and devoted minds. It looks well on paper. But the experiment has been made, and *it has failed.*

* It was not till the time of William of Corboil, about 1129, that the marriage of Secular Priests was put down in England. Anselm seems to have attempted it about 1102, but Henry I. opposed him. It is plain that many Bishops in that reign and later were married men. See Collier of Geoffrey Rydal, Bishop of Ely. 1174—89. Collier, i. 381.

persons may be staggered, but *we* can answer, *We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God:* and for the truth of our position we can appeal to Bishop Fisher, a martyr to the Romish cause, who expressly tells us that "the doctrine of Purgatory was rarely, if at all, heard of among the ancients; and to this very day, the Greeks believe it not:" and he adds, with reference to the doctrine of Indulgences, "so long as men were unconcerned about Purgatory, nobody inquired after Indulgences, for on that all their worth depends."* Yes, and we can quote passages innumerable from the Fathers to shew that the ancient faith was, as the true faith is, that when our life in this world is brought to a close, our state of probation ceases†; aye, and we can shew that the first authoritative decree concerning Purgatory was made so lately as in the Council of Florence in the year 1438.

And be not astonished, brethren, at the admission made by Bishop Fisher;—I could produce to you similar admissions from Romish divines on almost every point. Of all vulgar errors, as you must have already perceived, none can be greater than that which would represent the Papists as appellants to antiquity. *Their* principle is obedience to those who from time to time occupy the place of ecclesiastical rulers. These, in their opinion, con-

* Op. p. 496, Ed. 1597, Art. Cont. Lutherum.
† Perceval on the Roman Schism, p. 354.

stitute that Church which is to be heard under penalty of being accounted a heathen or a publican; consequently there is no room for an appeal to antiquity, and accordingly the attempt to appeal from the present to the ancient Church has been branded by them, as Bishop Jebb shews, with the odious stamp of heresy.*

But it is said that those who defer to tradition hold the dogma of Transubstantiation. That the Fathers did hold the doctrine of our Lord's *real* presence in the Eucharist, (real though spiritual, or rather the more real because spiritual,) we not only do not deny, but unequivocally assert. That is to say, they held what the Church of England holds, and what our wise-hearted Reformers maintained on this subject: for, as Bishop Cleaver observes, "the great object of our Reformers was, whilst they acknowledged the doctrine of the real presence, to refute that of Transubstantiation, as it was afterwards to refute the notion of Impanation or Consubstantiation"†: the Fathers held with the Church of England that *the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the*

* Bishop Jebb, Peculiar Character of the Church of England, p. 289.

† Bishop Cleaver's Sermon, Nov. 25, 1787. See also Bishop Ridley's Treatise against the Error of Transubstantiation; Bishop Poynet's Treatise of Reconciliation, or Diallacticon, and Archbishop Cranmer's Defence of the Catholic doctrine. B. iii.

*Lord's Supper;* they were wont to exhort their hearers, as the Church of England exhorts us, to consider the dignity of those *high and holy mysteries;** *of that high mystery, that heavenly feast, the banquet of that most heavenly food:* all expressions of our Liturgy: they did, indeed, look upon the altar to be, as our xxvii. Homily calls it, "*The King of Kings' Table*": they were wont to declare, as in that Homily is declared, "Thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the Supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent"; but "that the faithful receive not only the outward Sacrament, but the spiritual thing also; not the figure but the truth; not the shadow only, but the Body." So says the Church of England, and so said the Fathers. If some persons cannot make a distinction between the real presence of Christ in his spirit and power, and the corporeal presence, which is Transubstantiation, and so accuse us of Popish doctrine, they must blame the Church of England too; and so we err in good company. To censure the dogma of Transubstantiation too strongly is impossible, because it has not only given occasion, as our 28th article mildly states it, to many superstitions; but it has also led to the assertion and belief of what to my mind is absolutely blasphemous, that there is in the Eucharist

* Exhortation to Communion Office.

an expiatory sacrifice: that therein, I utter it with horror, our Blessed Lord and Saviour is each time sacrificed afresh; that there is each time a fresh immolation and death. But still, the only real question is this, Has it been revealed?—Is it part of the Revelation of God to man? The Romanist affirms that it is, and he refers to our Lord's own words, *This is my Body,—This is my Blood.* He calls upon us, in humble faith, to receive these words in the literal sense. To this all Protestants demur: the Romanist has, of course, a right to demand the reason: by some persons he is told that the doctrine of transubstantiation, which he would build upon this passage, involves an impossibility; that it is an insult to the understanding, a contradiction to the senses, to call upon us to embrace it. Are you contented with these—what shall I call them?—arguments? or dogmatisms? It may be that you are; but when you try to convert the Romanist, he replies that he sees no more difficulty in believing the doctrine of Transubstantiation than in receiving the doctrine of the Trinity. Upon this, perhaps, you refine and you point out the difference between things above reason and things contrary to reason, which is doubtless perfectly correct, but it is a refinement as difficult to unlearned minds as any thing to be found in the writings of the Fathers. And in spite of it, when you are engaged in controversy with the Socinian you may perhaps find

some of these hard words retorted upon yourself. The Socinian will speak of impossibilities, insults to the understanding, contradiction to the senses and so forth. But we will not quarrel with those who thus attempt to refute the dogma of Transubstantiation. All that we say is that we do not like to elevate ourselves and to judge of what the Almighty can do or cannot do. And certainly our mode of proceeding is far easier and more intelligible to the brethren at large. We tell the Romanist that we understand the passage referred to, with the English Church, in a sublime and mysterious, but not in a literal sense. For as the Catholic creeds and holy Scripture teach, we believe our holy Redeemer's body is in heaven, and will there remain, till he shall come, in like manner as he ascended, at the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead. And as to the dogma of Transubstantiation, *we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.* If that passage implies the doctrine of Transubstantiation, we ask how came it to pass that this doctrine was unknown to the Catholic Church for seven hundred years? We know it as an indisputable fact that this error was first started in the eighth century; that it found its most able advocate in Pascasius Radbert, in the ninth century; and that when this error was first introduced, it was spoken of by Raban Maurus, the pupil of our countryman Alcuin, Archbishop of Mentz, as an error broached by some individuals "unsoundly thinking

OF LATE," and by the contemporary Divines of the Churches of England and Ireland it was strongly opposed.* We know, moreover, that it was not authoritatively received even by the Roman Church till the Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215. So, then, brethren, those who defer to Primitive Tradition, and study the writings of the Ancients, may be thought by some persons to be the most judicious opponents of Romanism,†—but certain it is, that they can-

* See Perceval's Roman Schism, 40, 56, 132, 346, 225, 372, 429.

† The question as to the proper manner of opposing Romanism is one of great importance. I can state it on high authority, that the Papists always calculate on twenty or thirty converts to their system, after a meeting in any place of the so-called Reformation Society. The declamatory violence at these meetings disgusts some persons, in others doubts are suggested while weak arguments are used to answer them, and recourse is eventually had, under the idea of hearing both sides, to the Romish Priest for their solution. To support a good cause with bad arguments is the best aid that can be given to those whose cause is bad. There are many anti-popery sermons and speeches reported in the newspapers which suggest a doubt to the mind whether those who delivered them were the more ignorant of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, or of the doctrines of the Church of England. And it is no new art of the Romanists to attack the Church in this way by their own emissaries in disguise. "In the 16th century, one *Cummin*, a friar, contrived to be taken into the Puritans' pulpits, where, as he stated at the Councils, 'I preached against set forms of prayer, and I called *English prayers*, *English mass*, and have persuaded several to pray *spiritually and extempore:* and this hath so taken with the people that the Church of England is become as odious to that sort of people whom I instructed, as the mass is to the Church of England, and this will be a stumbling block to that Church so long as it is a Church.' For this the Pope commended him and gave him a reward of 2000 ducats for his good service. Are there not many at the present day, of whom if they were to apply to the Pope

not receive the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation until they have renounced these principles. No, nor with reference to the Eucharist will they ever consent to withhold the cup from the laity, an injustice, robbery, and wrong, not sanctioned even by the Romish Church till the Council of Constance in 1414.

for a reward on the same score, all the world could witness that they have well deserved it at his hands? Surely our opponents have some reason to feel misgivings when they find themselves treading in the footsteps of the Heathen revilers of Christianity, and of the Popish hireling underminers of the bulwark of Protestantism.—*Perceval on Apostolical Succession, pp.* 64, 65." I may here remark on the craft of the Romanists of the present day. In order to cause division among Protestants, in some of their publications they are said to have spoken of the writers of the Oxford Tracts as allies. In the report, however, of one of Dr. Wiseman's Lectures to Romanists at Manchester, it appears that "he broke out in a strain of passionate invective against the writers of the Tracts for the Times, denouncing them, and complaining that they had started a line of argument against their Popish opponents that had been left undisturbed for a century."—*Manchester Courier*, Oct. 26, 1839. To the falsehoods of Popish Priests I have traced many of the absurd stories propagated by Dissenters against consistent Churchmen.

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On the publication of the first Edition of this Sermon, I was called upon by an Agent of the Reformation Society to *name* to him my authority for stating that the Romanists calculate on twenty or thirty converts after a meeting in any place of the Reformation Society. If I had been at liberty to name my authority, I should have done so before. I only desired before, and I only desire now, that the statement may be received with just so much of credit as attaches to my word that I made it on high authority: authority as high as that of Dr. Wiseman when his opinion is quoted with reference to High Churchmen. The Romanists may err in their calculation, as Dr. Wiseman does in calculating the bad influence of High-Church principles; I merely state what they assert.

I will refer to one other topic and then conclude. That which, in my humble opinion, makes the Church of Rome, and all Churches connected with her, by receiving the decrees of the Council of Trent, to be absolutely heretical,—that which has separated them from the Catholic Church itself, that which renders all union with them utterly impossible, is this:—that to the Scriptures of God and the Creeds of the Church they have made additions. To the three Creeds which we possess in common with the whole Church, they have added the Creed of Pope Pius the IV.; and they receive the Books of the Apocrypha as equally sacred and canonical with the Books of Holy Scripture. Now I ask how are we to prove that in so doing the Romish Church is in error? How but by consulting those very Fathers, for having a regard for whom we are too often misrepresented? How but by referring to Origen, and Eusebius, and St. Athanasius, and St. Hilary, and Epiphanius, and St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Jerome*: the latter of whom, after enumerating the Canonical Books of Scripture, expressly declares that "whatever is beside these is to be reckoned among the Apocrypha"? How but by reference to the Councils of Chalcedon, and Laodicea, and Nice, and to the Apostolical canons? Perhaps those who disapprove of

* Præf in Librum Regum. See the quotations at length in Perceval, 420; and the Councils, pp. 41, 56, 159, 362.

this, are contented with the authority of some modern writer who asserts that he has examined the subject. Be it so; and the Romanist may be perplexed to understand why he is to be blamed for placing the same confidence in *his* writers who make an assertion contrary to that on which the Protestant relies. But, at all events, it cannot be sinful in us to examine the Fathers and Councils themselves to be certain that the modern writer is correct. And so you see that the Fathers are not utterly to be despised; but some regard to antiquity may be of service to our learned men. And he who shall tell us, as we have been virtually told of late, "if these books contain the same doctrine with the Bible they can be of no use since the Bible contains all necessary truth, but if they contain anything contrary to the Bible they ought not to be suffered, let them, therefore, be destroyed," will reason more like the Moslem fanatic than an enlightened Christian.

In what has now been said, it has not been my wish to give unnecessary offence. My chief object has been to shew that into whatever errors our respect for antiquity may lead us—and, since all things connected with man are liable to abuse, I am ready to admit that there may be some errors,—it is not to Popery that it tends: nay, that armed as others may think themselves by arguments, we are doubly armed: we have their

arguments, for as much as they are worth, and we have, moreover, the testimony of the primitive Church. As a very learned man of this town profoundly remarks, "Tradition itself is the very evidence on which we convict what are *called* Traditions, (by the Papists,) of defective authority."* If the charge of our being popishly affected be brought against us, because even to Romanists we would extend our charity, and instead of returning railing for their railing would convince them by argument, while we treat them with that courtesy which Christianity does not absolutely forbid; and, admit, what in candour *must* be admitted, that they have much in their system that is true, for they have much in common, not only with the Church of England, but with all Protestants except the "Unitarians": if on this account the charge be brought against us, to it we must plead guilty. By some persons it is not considered a breach of Christian charity to adopt towards the Romish Dissenters every species of vituperation which the arts of rhetoric and a skilful periphrasis may render not vulgar; it is not considered a breach of Christian charity to excite against them the wildest passions of the fanatic, and to exhibit, instead of the gentle persuasions of the Christian preacher, a close imitation of the vehement declamations of the heathen orator; but against Protestant Dissenters, whom the religious

* Parkinson's Hulsean Lectures, 1838, p. 84.

world, (not infallible, but acting as if it were so) pronounces to be orthodox, to insinuate that *they* may err on any essential point, is a breach of charity which is, in the eyes of the religious world, unpardonable. Now, my brethren, the true Churchman stands fairly and boldly in the middle way: he considers both, the Protestant and the Romish Dissenter, to be in error—the latter by adding to, the former by detracting from, the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church. He conceives it to be the part both of duty and of charity to maintain that middle position in which God has placed him, and, as occasion offers, to warn either side of the errors committed on that side, and of the danger, when warned, of adhering to them. But here he remains: he advances no further: he assumes not to himself the character of judge, when our Lord commands us *Judge not.* What amount of truth it may be necessary for each individual, for his salvation to possess, he knows not. He only knows that each man will be judged *by that he hath, not by that he hath not;* and that our duty it is, without respect of persons, without caring for whom it may seem to condemn, to declare *all the counsel of God.* We treat no error with toleration; we treat no person with unkindness or disrespect. If we see the Protestant Dissenter or the Romish Dissenter surpassing us in holiness, we do not pronounce them to be free from error, nor do we represent their errors as

trivial, or conceal from them our opinion, that if the means of avoiding those errors have been within their reach they will be accountable to God for not having recourse to them: but we *do* say in great humility, *What* a man would this have been had he been blessed with my superior advantages! And what a sinner am I, that with all my superior advantages I am in my conduct his inferior! and this sends us to our knees and our self-denials, that we may obtain pardon for the past through the merits and intercession of an Almighty Saviour; and grace for the future, to form habits of stricter piety.

In short, we learn from Scripture, as well as from antiquity, that a firm uncompromising adherence to our principles, a calm, steady, zealous promulgation of the truth, and a fearless rebuke of error, are all parts of Christian charity: but when either Romanist or Protestant has recourse to persecution whether physical or moral, to the horrors of the inquisition or to railing accusations, we reply, *We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.*

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## POSTSCRIPTUM.

While this Sermon was passing through the press, the following letter was received from the learned and pious Rector of Crayke, whose permission to publish it has been obtained. In order to guard against miscon-

ception, I may observe that my statement is this: that the *tendency* of our principle is not to Romanism but the contrary; and that of those who have maintained that principle we know of none who have been perverted to Popery. But I do honestly confess that, from the aspect of the times, I have my fears that the ranks of Popery may be increased, not from the exertions of the Romanists, but from the violence of temper, the uncharitable conduct, the misrepresentation of facts and persons, displayed by some portions of the ultra-protestant press. The extreme intolerance manifested by some parties against all who do not go all lengths with the protestant religious world, is certainly alienating many minds from Protestantism. In the opinion of those who agree with the present writer the only way to prevent such persons from falling into Popery is to prove to them that Romanism is not Catholicism; that it is a novelty; and then to adhere, as closely as circumstances will admit, to all that is *really* ancient.

[COPY.]

MY DEAR SIR,

I beg to call your attention to a singular attempt which has been made to disprove a statement of yours, made, I think, at a meeting of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, at Boston, viz. "That no Churchman, who understood what are called High Church principles, has ever become a Romanist."

The "Christian Observer" for last month, having commented upon your statement in his own way, proceeds to attempt what is certainly far better, if it were practicable—to refute it by reference to facts. He asserts that the Hon. and Rev. Geo. Spencer, in his account of his conversion, published in the [Roman] "Catholic Magazine" for April, has alluded to a Protestant Clergyman, by whose conversation and arguments he was led to become a Romanist; and that this Clergyman was the late Rev. Thos. Sikes, of Guilsborough, Northants; whom the "Christian Observer" proceeds to speak of as an enemy to the Bible,

because he was opposed to the Bible Society: which is about as good an argument as if you were to speak of an opponent of the Jesuits* as an enemy of the blessed Lord Jesus.

To confirm his interpretation of Mr. Spencer's allusion, the "Christian Observer" brings forward a passage from a recent work of the Rev. Dr. Nolan; in which that gentleman asserts that "he has seen a letter written by the Hon and Rev. Mr. Spencer, in which he attributes his conversion to the light let in upon his mind by Mr. Sikes's work on Parochial Communion."

I have no doubt, my dear Sir, you will agree with me as to the good feeling, good taste, and *prudence* shewn by these Reverend Gentlemen in attacking a High Churchman of the last generation, who, after passing a long and honoured life, full of mercy and alms-deeds, has been for many years gone to his reward. However, on seeing these statements I thought it right to address a line to the Hon. and Rev. Geo. Spencer, who, though he has left the Church of England, is still a Christian Gentleman, and he has put it in my power to state the two following facts from his answer to my letter.

1. That the Protestant clergyman, who is mentioned as having given him an impression favourable to Romanism, was *not* the late Rev. Thos. Sikes, but another clergyman of VERY DIFFERENT sentiments, whose name is stated in Mr. Spencer's letter, but which I shall not make public, as it is enough for me to have contradicted the charge against Mr. Sikes.

2. That it is impossible for the Rev. Dr. Nolan to have seen a letter of Mr. Spencer's containing such a statement as is there mentioned; for in fact, although Mr. Spencer possessed a copy of Mr. Sikes's work on Parochial Communion, he never gave it a perusal.

I presume, after this, till Dr. Nolan at least can produce the letter he professes to have seen, the "Christian Observer" will think it necessary to look further for the High Churchman who has been led, by following out his own principles, to become a Romanist.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your's very faithfully,

EDW. CHURTON.

Crayke Rectory, Dec. 9, 1839.

* Jesuits style themselves Members of the Society of Jesus.

THE END.

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